



# BECKET

## Berkshire County



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## NARRATIVE

### **Narrative**

The Town of Becket is an upland town that was established in 1765, having begun as Plantation Number 4. The town was originally laid out in 1735 along with three other towns along the wilderness trail that connected the lower Housatonic Valley with the Connecticut Valley and Boston. The intention was to develop the wilderness that bordered the trail and therefore to make the trail safer to travel. Sixty-three home lots were laid out in the first settlement effort, "in a compact and defensible form" as the documents of the time said. Population growth, though slow, has been steady in the rural community. In 1776, there were 414 residents; in 1900 there were 994 residents; the modern town boasts about 1700 residents. In 1798, Becket tried a noble experiment, which foreshadowed the future in America and which was unique among the frontier towns of the 18th century. The people of Becket could see the problems they and their neighboring communities were having supporting a church and minister using mandated tax monies. There were splits in the congregations, secessions of church members, and interminable battles and quarrels as a religiously diverse population opposed being forced to pay for the support of a minister with whose doctrines they disagreed. In response to this problem the Congregational residents of Becket formed a Congregational Church Society which relied solely on the voluntary contributions of its members to support its church, a church funding structure which is now in use everywhere in the United States.

In more modern times, Becket has been beloved by fishermen and was known in the 1940's for having one of the five best trout streams in the Berkshires. The West Branch of the Westfield River, which forms part of the northern boundary of Becket, was known for the brooks, browns and rainbow trout stocked there.

(Seal supplied by community. Narrative compiled from historical materials.)



# GEOGRAPHY

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## Location

Western Massachusetts, bordered by Washington and Middlefield on the north, Chester and Blandford on the east, Otis on the south, and Tyringham and Lee on the west. Becket is 19 miles southeast of Pittsfield, 39 miles northwest of Springfield, 120 miles west of Boston, and 155 miles from New York City.

**Total Area:** 47.76 sq. miles

**Land Area:** 46.27 sq. miles

**Population:** 1,481

**Density:** 32 per sq. mile

## Climate

(National Climatic Data Center)

(Great Barrington Station)

Normal temperature in January.....20.1°F

Normal temperature in July.....68.1°F

Normal annual precipitation.....44.8"

## U.S.G.S. Topographical Plates

Becket, Otis, East Lee, Monerey

## Regional Planning Agency

Berkshire County

## Metropolitan Statistical Area

(1993 Definition)



# GOVERNMENT

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## Municipal Offices

Main Number: (413) 623-8934

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

## Form of Government

Board of Selectmen

Administrative

Open Town Meeting

## Year Incorporated

As a town: 1765

## Registered Voters (Secretary of State 1994)

|                   | Number | %    |   |
|-------------------|--------|------|---|
| Total Registered  | 854    |      |   |
| Democrats         | 180    | 21.1 | % |
| Republicans       | 107    | 12.5 | % |
| Other parties     | 0      | 0.0  | % |
| Unenrolled Voters | 567    | 66.4 | % |

## Legislators

[Senators and Representatives by City and Town](#)



# DEMOGRAPHICS

**Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000**

Geographic Area: Becket town, Berkshire County, Massachusetts

[For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see text]

| Subject   | Number | Percent | Subject  | Number | Percent |
|---|--------|---------|--|--------|---------|
| Total population.....                           | 1,755  | 100.0   | HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE                          |        |         |
| SEX AND AGE                                     |        |         | Total population.....                                | 1,755  | 100.0   |
| Male.....                                       | 883    | 50.3    | Hispanic or Latino (of any race).....                | 19     | 1.1     |
| Female.....                                     | 872    | 49.7    | Mexican.....   | 1      | 0.1     |
| Under 5 years.....                              | 87     | 5.0     | Puerto Rican.....                                    | 3      | 0.2     |
| 5 to 9 years.....                               | 114    | 6.5     | Cuban.....   | 3      | 0.2     |
| 10 to 14 years.....                             | 141    | 8.0     | Other Hispanic or Latino.....                        | 12     | 0.7     |
| 15 to 19 years.....                             | 112    | 6.4     | Not Hispanic or Latino.....                          | 1,736  | 98.9    |
| 20 to 24 years.....                             | 59     | 3.4     | White alone.....                                     | 1,696  | 96.6    |
| 25 to 34 years.....                             | 178    | 10.1    | RELATIONSHIP   |        |         |
| 35 to 44 years.....                             | 334    | 19.0    | Total population.....                                | 1,755  | 100.0   |
| 45 to 54 years.....                             | 285    | 16.2    | In households.....                                   | 1,730  | 98.6    |
| 55 to 59 years.....                             | 114    | 6.5     | Householder.....                                     | 692    | 39.4    |
| 60 to 64 years.....                             | 103    | 5.9     | Spouse.....  | 427    | 24.3    |
| 65 to 74 years.....                             | 138    | 7.9     | Child.....   | 477    | 27.2    |
| 75 to 84 years.....                             | 72     | 4.1     | Own child under 18 years.....                        | 385    | 21.9    |
| 85 years and over.....                          | 18     | 1.0     | Other relatives.....                                 | 66     | 3.8     |
| Median age (years).....                         | 40.6   | (X)     | Under 18 years.....                                  | 21     | 1.2     |
| 18 years and over.....                          | 1,341  | 76.4    | Nonrelatives.....                                    | 68     | 3.9     |
| Male.....                                       | 675    | 38.5    | Unmarried partner.....                               | 40     | 2.3     |
| Female.....                                     | 666    | 37.9    | In group quarters.....                               | 25     | 1.4     |
| 21 years and over.....                          | 1,292  | 73.6    | Institutionalized population.....                    | -      | -       |
| 62 years and over.....                          | 277    | 15.8    | Noninstitutionalized population.....                 | 25     | 1.4     |
| 65 years and over.....                          | 228    | 13.0    | HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE                                    |        |         |
| Male.....                                       | 115    | 6.6     | Total households.....                                | 692    | 100.0   |
| Female.....                                     | 113    | 6.4     | Family households (families).....                    | 506    | 73.0    |
| RACE  |        |         | With own children under 18 years.....                | 214    | 30.9    |
| One race.....                                   | 1,736  | 98.9    | Married-couple family.....                           | 427    | 61.7    |
| White.....                                      | 1,710  | 97.4    | With own children under 18 years.....                | 177    | 25.6    |
| Black or African American.....                  | 12     | 0.7     | Female householder, no husband present.....          | 46     | 6.6     |
| American Indian and Alaska Native.....          | 3      | 0.2     | With own children under 18 years.....                | 24     | 3.5     |
| Asian.....                                      | 9      | 0.5     | Nonfamily households.....                            | 187    | 27.0    |
| Asian Indian.....                               | 1      | 0.1     | Householder living alone.....                        | 152    | 22.0    |
| Chinese.....                                    | 1      | 0.1     | Householder 65 years and over.....                   | 53     | 7.7     |
| Filipino.....                                   | 3      | 0.2     | Households with individuals under 18 years.....      | 231    | 33.4    |
| Japanese.....                                   | 2      | 0.1     | Households with individuals 65 years and over.....   | 169    | 24.4    |
| Korean.....                                     | -      | -       | Average household size.....                          | 2.50   | (X)     |
| Vietnamese.....                                 | -      | -       | Average family size.....                             | 2.92   | (X)     |
| Other Asian <sup>1</sup> .....                  | 2      | 0.1     | HOUSING OCCUPANCY                                    |        |         |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander..... | -      | -       | Total housing units.....                             | 1,451  | 100.0   |
| Native Hawaiian.....                            | -      | -       | Occupied housing units.....                          | 692    | 47.7    |
| Guamanian or Chamorro.....                      | -      | -       | Vacant housing units.....                            | 759    | 52.3    |
| Samoan.....                                     | -      | -       | For seasonal, recreational, or                       |        |         |
| Other Pacific Islander <sup>2</sup> .....       | -      | -       | occasional use.....                                  | 712    | 49.1    |
| Some other race.....                            | 2      | 0.1     | Homeowner vacancy rate (percent).....                | 3.3    | (X)     |
| Two or more races.....                          | 19     | 1.1     | Rental vacancy rate (percent).....                   | 5.9    | (X)     |
| Race alone or in combination with one           |        |         | HOUSING TENURE                                       |        |         |
| or more other races: <sup>3</sup>               |        |         | Occupied housing units.....                          | 692    | 100.0   |
| White.....                                      | 1,729  | 98.5    | Owner-occupied housing units.....                    | 612    | 88.4    |
| Black or African American.....                  | 16     | 0.9     | Renter-occupied housing units.....                   | 80     | 11.6    |
| American Indian and Alaska Native.....          | 10     | 0.6     | Average household size of owner-occupied units.....  | 2.49   | (X)     |
| Asian.....                                      | 15     | 0.9     | Average household size of renter-occupied units..... | 2.56   | (X)     |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander..... | -      | -       |  |        |         |
| Some other race.....                            | 4      | 0.2     |  |        |         |

- Represents zero or rounds to zero. (X) Not applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

<sup>2</sup> Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories.

<sup>3</sup> In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.



# HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

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Housing Information: (Units, occupancy, value, structure type, year built, etc.) -

**Home Sales** (Banker & Tradesman) -

[Town Stats - Free market Statistics](#)

**Subsidized Housing Units** (DHCD 1998)

[DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory](#)

Subsidized Housing Units: The number of housing units which count toward the municipality's 10% goal for low- and moderate-income housing. It includes both subsidized affordable units and market rate units in certain eligible subsidized developments.

**Public Housing Units** (DHCD 1999)

Conventional State: 0

Conventional Federal: 0

**Rental Assistance**(DHCD 1999)

State (MRVP: 0

Federal (Section 8): 0

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# FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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## **[The Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training](#)**

DET publishes the state's monthly employment and unemployment report, analyzes the condition of the state's economy, examines economic trends, and formulates industry and occupational projections. All of these are essential to public and private sector economists, employers, and public officials who use the information to formulate policy, craft law, and make strategic decisions for the future.

## **[Municipal Data Bank](#)**

### **[Division of Local Services, Massachusetts Department of Revenue.](#)**

The Municipal Data Bank collects, analyzes and distributes financial, demographic and economic data on Massachusetts cities and towns. Financial data comes from a series of reports that municipalities submit annually to the Division of Local Services. Demographic and economic data is collected from other state and federal agencies. The Data Bank develops and maintains systems to collect and distribute the information, assists users in interpretation and use, participates in research projects with other agencies and organizations, and distributes reports which summarize data analyses

## **[Division of Transitional Assistance](#)**

The Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), formerly known as the Department of Public Welfare, is the state agency responsible for administering public assistance programs for needy citizens of the Commonwealth



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# TRANSPORTATION

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## TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

Becket is situated in Berkshire County, a region of hills and low mountains that widen to create the Berkshire Valley in the south. The major cities and towns are linked together by U.S. Route 7. North Adams and Pittsfield are major points of entry for rail freight into Massachusetts, and the region has several commercial airports. Public roads and highways meet the requirements of modern transportation.

### Major Highways

Principal highways are State Route 8, U.S. Route 20, and the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90). No interchange.

### Rail

Freight rail service is available from Conrail. Contact number: (617) 783-6222

### Bus

Becket is not affiliated with any regional transit authority.

### Other

The Great Barrington Airport, a General Aviation (GA) facility, is accessible from Becket. It has a 2,579' x 50' asphalt runway. Instrument approaches available: Non-precision.



# CULTURE AND RECREATION

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## LIBRARIES

[Board of Library Commissioners On-line Library Catalog](#)

## MUSEUMS

(American Association of Museums)

None

## RECREATION

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

**Recreational Facilities** (Recreational sites and activities)

[Department of Environmental Management Recreation Section](#)





# MISCELLANEOUS

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## HEALTH FACILITIES

(Dept. of Public Health 1992)

### Hospitals

None

### Long Term Care

None

### Hospices

None

### Rest Homes

None

### UTILITIES

[Telephone Numbers for Public Utilities](#)

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NOTE: The COMMUNITY PROFILE draws information from a diversity of sources. The main source of information is listed under each section. In some instances comments submitted by the municipality were incorporated to correct and/or enhance the information obtained from the main source. However, no changes were made to those data bases which must be consistent throughout the state. DHCD has made efforts to ensure the accuracy of all data in the COMMUNITY PROFILES, but cannot take responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this document.